

MASTERS Audio Club, February 2019
Jason Schneidman
The Men's Groomer



With his mission of "a haircut can change someone's life," celebrity hairstylist **Jason Schneidman** uses his "power" (hairedresser for Bruno Mars, Rob Lowe, James Corden, Hugh Jackman, Jonah Hill, and others) to shine a light on the drug-addicted homeless.

Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, this self-proclaimed recovering addict/hairedresser is doing incredible things in his career and in his world of giving back. Learn what drives Jason to help others, how he taught himself to do men's makeup, and how he established his company and brand as The Men's Groomer.

Winn: Hey everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to this wonderful, wonderful issue of MASTERS. If all of us just relax and surrender and listen, there's all kinds of messages coming at us and coming to us at every moment and I'm trying to trust that process more and more. Or I am trusting that process more and more, which is how I came across this guy that I'm sitting with right now, through my husband George, who follows Jason on his social media and has been talking about you and says, "Winn, it's time that you meet this guy. We've got to track this guy down." And I can't remember, how did I finally get to you? I think maybe I sent you an email through your website or maybe a message—I messaged you through Facebook? I don't know, but immediately you responded and now less than a couple of weeks, here we are sitting here.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: You say yes instantly, don't you?

Jason: I'm a yes dude. I've been taught to be a yes dude and I sift through everything that's sent to me and I follow up. And like you taking a chance on, you know, hearing my story, I do that to everybody else.

Winn: Hm. Oh, by the way, I'm sitting here with Jason Schneidman. So—

Jason: *[laughs]*

Winn: —welcome, Jason. *[laughs]*

Jason: Thank you.

Winn: So Jason is a hairdresser but our audience—Jason, just so you know—is not just the hairdressing community. There—I have subscribers all over the world who have nothing to do with the beauty industry but I seek out people who have messages that are universal and yours absolutely falls into that category but the story that you have to share is unique. I think everybody loves hairdressing stories anyway.

Jason: *[laughs]* That's interesting. Yeah—

Winn: Don't you find that that's the case? I mean—

Jason: I—

Winn: —it's like—you just told me a story that you're sitting at the Grammys, backstage at the Grammys, right?

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: And who's standing next to the host? A hairdresser: you.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: A hairdresser.

Jason: Yeah. I've ended up in some pretty amazing places and I had no idea when I started to do beauty school in 1984 that I would be where I'm at today.

Winn: Well, just to hook people in right away: you are part of the—is it *The Late Show* or *The Late Late Show with James Corden*?

Jason: Yeah, so I do *The Late Late Show* four nights a week. I met James four years ago when he came over here from the UK and I basically got him ready for the upfronts, which is something you do to sell a TV show. And I was told that this guy had a talk show. Didn't know who he was. He was a celebrity over in London. But I Googled him and I was like, "Okay." And I showed up and I got him ready and I've gotten pretty fast over the years so he was like, "Oh my God. This is crazy. Will you do my show with me?" And I didn't know what that entailed and I'm a yes guy so I said yes and then I said, "We'll look into it," and it's been a life-changer. The guy's amazing; such a sweet, funny, amazing, giving person. And my life completely changed. I'm in the union now and I'm able to provide for my family. I've got a wife and two kids and benefits and it's almost like a second job. And I get to go there for a couple hours and knock out skits and Carpool Karaoke and all kinds of stuff. And it's just truly a blessing.

Winn: We saw him—Coldplay pulled him up onstage at a Coldplay—

Jason: Oh, that's right.

Winn: —concert and he—

Jason: Yep.

Winn: —sang with Coldplay. It was pretty cool.

Jason: Talking about a yes guy.

Winn: Funny guy. Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. He'll do it.

Winn: He's hilarious.

Jason: He'll do it. Yeah, he's great.

Winn: Good for you.

Jason: Yeah. So fun.

Winn: And also just so our—'cause I think our—a couple people asked me to ask you about this: if you were the person who talked Bruno Mars into putting curlers in his hair for *Uptown Funk*.

Jason: So I did not talk him into it. He is creative as all can be—and I'm not going to curse—

Winn: Right.

Jason: —but there would have been a curse word there—but yeah, so he—it was his idea. He is, you know, a leader and *[laughs]* a creative person so he was like, "I want to do curlers." And I was like, "Just so happens, I can knock curlers out in two minutes flat!"

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: Because I was in beauty school next to Leisure World, which was like an old folks' place, and those were our clients when I was in beauty school. And that's what we did all day. We sat there and rolled up perms and roller sets and I was like, *When am I going to ever use this?* And it came in handy—

Winn: *[laughs]* How many years later, you finally get to use—

Jason: Yes! Yep.

Winn: —roller—

Jason: Twenty-five years later, I'm knocking it out. And I went from a pompadour into rollers and then back to a pompadour all in 20 minutes flat because we had to reshoot—

Winn: For the shoot of the—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —*Uptown Funk*.

Jason: *Uptown Funk*.

Winn: Yeah. And you also—Hugh Jackman, you've been on the road with Hugh Jackman and so you've got quite the celebrity clientele.

Jason: Yeah. Hugh was one of the first people I started working with. Chris McMillan—who does Jennifer Aniston's hair, who's known for the Rachel, which—

Winn: Right.

Jason: —is a famous hairstyle—

Winn: From *Friends*. Oh yeah.

Jason: Yeah. And I worked under Chris and he's been a mentor for me. He actually played a big part in my sobriety, which we'll get into later, I'm sure. But he was working with Hugh, Chris got sick, Hugh needed somebody, and Chris was like, "Dude, I need you to show up." And I flew to Miami and did a thing with Hugh and I came in and knocked it out. And I ended up being the second go-to for Hugh. And then me and Chris—that's happened with a lot of his clients—I was able to just kind of ride his coattails and catch the runoff.

Winn: So what you're saying is you're poisoning Chris McMillan so he's sick and you get called in.

Jason: *[laughs]*

Winn: Is that what you're trying to tell us here?

Jason: Oh, that's a good one.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: I can up my clientele. Don't—

Winn: There you go.

Jason: Don't—yeah.

Winn: You've worked with Chris McMillan, what, 18 years now?

Jason: Yeah. We started working 18 years ago. I showed up and didn't pick up a scissor after—I'd already been a hairstylist but I had to get humble and sit there and just listen and—

Winn: Be a student.

Jason: —watch. Yep. And sometimes that's what it takes and I'm so grateful that I did it.

Winn: This interview is absolutely not going to be about your celebrity clientele but, you know, you've got to hook people in.

Jason: Good. Do what you—

Winn: 'Cause we have all kinds of wonderful things that we have to talk about.

Jason: Well, it's—

Winn: That we get to talk about.

Jason: It's interesting you said that because my celebrity clientele gets people to show up to my service events.

Winn: There you go.

Jason: So it's a good hook.

Winn: You also—I saw—I watched a couple of clips of you on *Doctors*, *The Doctor* show—

Jason: Yes.

Winn: —also on *Dr. Phil*.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: So you're making the rounds.

Jason: Yeah. Trying to carry this message of service and helping out the homeless and addicts here in Los Angeles and all over the world. I mean, I travel to do hair stuff for people, grooming, and I'll bring my stuff and I'll head out to different cities when I'm there: New York, Houston. I was up in Vancouver and did some cuts. So just on my off time, I'll run out on the street and start talking to some people.

Winn: Well, other celebrities include Dustin Hoffman, David Foster, Jimmy Fallon, Mel Gibson, Owen Wilson, Rob Lowe, Robert Pattinson, Liam Neeson. That's

kind of a nice list there you've got. Editorial magazines include *Entertainment Weekly*, *Glamour*, *GQ*, *Men's Health*, all kinds of things.

Jason: It's crazy. I would have never thought a five-dollar haircut back in the day to get a pack of cigarettes would turn into all of this.

Winn: So listening to this now or reading this or hearing this, what does that make you feel like to think that it was hairdressing that took you to where you are today? And, again, there you are—you told me before we started recording—there you are when James is hosting the Grammys, you're the only person, as his hairdresser, standing next to him and he's introducing you to Adele and to all kinds of people.

Jason: Yeah. It's crazy, I—

Winn: It wasn't his attorney standing next to him, it's his hairdresser.

Jason: Yeah, right?

Winn: So—

Jason: No—

Winn: —I got to—I got involved with Betty White and Dolly Parton—

Jason: Mm-hm.

Winn: —to work with our FUNraising campaigns—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Like, "Oh, did you call their agent?" I'm like, "No, I called their hairdresser."

Jason: *[laughs]*

Winn: The agent's job is to say, "No, Betty's not available." You call the hairdresser, "Oh, I can get to Betty." *[laughs]*

Jason: It's crazy, my contact list and the connections, which I use to just help others, it's crazy. Like the other day I connected James with one of my clients, the guy that owns Sprinkles cupcakes.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And he started a new pizza place. I think it's called Pizzana.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And James is like, “I love that place!” And I’m like, “I think they’re opening a new one,” and I was the guy that put the connection together and James wrote a check and now he’s partners in—

Winn: I love it.

Jason: —a pizza place—

Winn: That’s great.

Jason: —’cause of me.

Winn: There you go. Now, you grew up in Southern California.

Jason: Mm-hm.

Winn: You’re a surfer.

Jason: Yup.

Winn: Kind of a rebellious type.

Jason: For sure.

Winn: Tell us your story and then we’ll get into the addiction story, which is going to be a big part of this, or it’s going to be a part of this, and it’s the recovery and what you’re doing with your recovery that’s the main message of this incredible interview that we get to do today, Jason.

Jason: Okay. So I’ll break it down. Since I was real young, I was the creative type and the rebellious type. My parents took me around the world a bit and I was seeing different places and different styles and I gravitated to styles. I was in Washington Square Park in New York and I would see these guys break dancing and they’d be wearing slippers. And then I’d come back to my little sleepy town here in Seal Beach, Orange County area, and I’m like, “This is the next new stuff. We need to wear these slippers.” And then everybody was like calling me Slippers ’cause I was wearing these slippers and I’m like, “You guys just wait,” and then sure enough, you know, eight months later everybody’s break dancing wearing these slippers. So I was the guy, real young, that would come back to my town and change me and all my friends’ styles so people would look at us and we would be able to hook up with girls. And it was working and I had a pair of clippers and I would go for it. And all my friends would try it out and it was working. But then what happened was I spent all my time in the water, from 12 to 20, and all I cared about was surfing. And I wasn’t going to school. I wasn’t a good student. You know, I had that ADHD type of personality where it was hard to focus and I didn’t—if I’m not into something, I’m not doing it. And English and geography and math, that stuff didn’t interest me. It was really difficult to be in school so I was

ditching school and then I got hooked on, you know, smoking weed, and then it ended up being cocaine. And I had barely graduated high school. And both of my parents were in the service industry. My mom is a physical therapist that worked with stroke patients and my dad is a high school biology teacher. And so I had a great upbringing and I was really connected with them and they're still married and they cared about me and I felt like I had to show them that I wasn't a complete scumbag so I was always faking it, you know? And my senior year of high school, I was taught that I could sign out on my own. And I had a Volkswagen Bug with surf racks on top and I was surfing and I was signing out and I failed my English class my senior year of high school. And the woman's like, "I really love you but I just can't pass you." And I'm like, "Yeah," and I tried to schmooze, and I can schmooze my way through everything, you know? But this last senior year, she was like, "I just can't do it because you haven't been here." And I was like, "I've got no answer to that." So I didn't get to walk with my class and graduate and I had to take summer school. But my—that was a turning point in my life because my parents were like, "What are you going to do with yourself?" And I said, "I'll just go to city college with all my friends." And they're like, "School? You don't go to school now. Why would you go to more school?"

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: "Why don't you pick a profession and we'll pay for it?" And I was like, "I don't know what I want to do." And they said, "Why don't you do hair? You do all your friends' hair. You're into style and I see you cutting your friends' hair." And I was like, "No way. Everyone's going to think I'm gay." This was 1984.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: This was a different era. There—it wasn't cool for dudes to be doing hair, you know what I mean? And I'm like—so my sister gave me a pep talk and, you know, "You've got to get over this sexual—" what's it called?

Winn: Homophobic? *[laughs]*

Jason: Homophobic. Thank you! *[laughs]* And so I was like, "Okay," and I went to hair school and there was 30 girls and I was the only dude. And I was—

Winn: So it worked out for you.

Jason: I was like—

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: "This is amazing!" And lunch break and the breakroom and I won't get into it but it was game time.

Winn: Okay.

Jason: And the other thing I noticed was everybody was surrounding me going, “How did you do that?” ’cause a lot of these people weren’t used to using clippers or whatever and I was just going for it.

Winn: And you had already been using them for—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —years.

Jason: Yeah. And so I was like, *Wow, this is cool. I’m getting attention from all ends*—no pun intended. *[laughs]* So I went to hair school and I continued to ditch and surf and I got kicked out of five hair schools. And it was a year program, it took me five years. And when I graduated, I still didn’t see myself as being a hairstylist and I continued to go on and I moved down to San Diego and I was selling drugs and I was doing nightclubs and I was keeping myself afloat because I’m a survivor. And it was great and it was a party and it was 10 years of partying. I always say that I took my retirement my first 30 years of my life ’cause I didn’t really work.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: And then what happened, the wheels fell off. And I had a drug addiction problem. I found crack cocaine and the cocaine wasn’t strong enough. I started smoking it and I would disappear and everybody was like, “Where did Jason go?” And I had to get sober because the cops were coming for me. But, you know, psychosis: people were coming for me that didn’t even exist.

Winn: Right.

Jason: I was losing my mind. I didn’t look good. I didn’t care about style. I didn’t care about surfing. And I was like, *I need to get out of here*. So I came back up to my parents’ house at 30 and I said, “I’m going to go legit. I’m going to be a hairstylist.” And I put both feet in the boat and I got sober and I met Chris McMillan at a meeting, and my mentor at the time, who’s helping with sobriety, said, “That dude does Jennifer Aniston’s hair.” And I walked up to him and I said, “Hey, I heard you’re the man. I want to come work for you.” And he’s like, “How much time sober you’ve got?” And I was like, “A week.” And he’s like, “Come back and talk to me when you get some time.” And I put together six months and I came back and he’s like, “Oh, I remember you! Yeah, you’re kind of cute.” And I was like, “Cool. Does that mean I got the job?”

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And he said, “You can come work for me one day a week,” and I did. And I stood there and I worked. And then there was a turn. I ended up—he left to go do a movie and after a year of working with him, I went back to work with a

bunch of guys that did—were at another salon in Beverly Hills and they were the bad boys. They worked with “Boom Boom” Mancini and Mickey Rourke and it was called Giuseppe Franco’s. And I worked with these guys at a different salon and I was sober and they were partiers and I was like, “Bro, you don’t know how I do it.” And they’re like, “Well—” you know, and I showed them how I do it. And within four months, I was hooked back on crack cocaine and I had relapsed and I was calling Chris McMillan’s salon going, “I need to come back. It was my best part of my life when I was with you guys. I was—I never felt better.” And they’re like, “Sorry, we’ve got nothing for you.” And then his—the front desk called and they said, “Chris needs you Monday morning. Can you be here?” And it was Saturday and I was like, “Absolutely.” And Sunday night at—actually, Sunday night I was smoking crystal meth and I was doing crack cocaine and I was drinking and I had to be there Monday morning at 7:45 ’cause his first client got there at 8:00. And at 7:30 I took my last crack hit, 7:30 in the morning, and I called a taxi and I jumped in the shower and I thought I was going to have a heart attack and my heart was jumping out and these people were coming for me. I was looking through the shower door and the shadows were coming. And I put two cigarettes behind my ear and I put my Clinique bronzer on my face ’cause I was a shade of green and purple. And I put the bronzer on, I did my hair and I got in the taxi and my jaw was going and my tongue was chewed up. And I got to Chris McMillan’s salon and I come walking up the courtyard and Chris and the manager—who was also sober, who was just tatted down—they watched me walk up and they were just laughing at me. And they’re like, “Oh. My. God. Where’s the rest of you?” And Chris was a—also had smoked crack and he was like, “Dude, when did you take the last hit?” thinking I might say a couple days ago or yesterday. I looked at my watch and I said, “Fifteen minutes ago.” And they were like, “No way! Oh my God!” And they were like, “Get him a breakfast burrito. He—we need to feed him.” So they did all this for me and, I mean, any other boss would say, “You need to go, you can’t be here today.”

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: But the fact that they were sober and they knew sobriety and that they didn’t give up and it was like, “Keep coming back. It works if you work it” type thing. So they said, “Okay, go shampoo Matthew Perry,” and that was Chris’s first client.

Winn: Geez.

Jason: And I would have the jaw was going and the tongue was going and I looked like one of those tweakers you see in a video.

Winn: Right.

Jason: And I’m over there shaking and I’m like, *Can I get through this haircut or this shampoo?* And I put Matthew Perry in the chair, he doesn’t look at me. I scrub

his head, I hope he doesn't look up. I put him in Chris's chair. I pulled it off. I went out to the courtyard. I sat down. I took the cigarette out of my ear. I sparked it up and I looked at Chris McMillan cutting Matthew Perry through the window and I'm like, *Oh my God*. I'm like, *At five o'clock I'm going to make \$100 from tips from the people and I'm going to get \$100 from Chris McMillan, cash, and at six o'clock I'll be back down on Western and Santa Monica Boulevard and I'll be able to get my crack*. And I had that burning-bush moment where I was like, *That's not why I came back here. I came here to get sober*. And I put out the cigarette and I ran in and right in front of Matthew Perry and Chris McMillan I said, "Chris, I've got a proposition for you." And he was like, "What, what's going on?" *[laughs]* And I said, "If you take me to that rehab that you went to—" which was a gnarly behavior-modification rehab—I said, "If you take me there and you pay for my first month—" 'cause I had exhausted every other funds. My parents were done. Everybody was done with me at this point. And I said, "If you pay for my first month—" which was \$1,500—"I'll work it off for 15 days," 'cause he was paying me \$100 a day. And he said, "Hold on a second." And he called the Liberty House and he said, "Hey, I've got this guy. He's serious. He's going to die. He's 130 pounds." And he said, "Can I get him in there?" And they said, "Sorry, we're full." And he's like, "No, you've got to understand. This is Chris McMillan and this guy needs help. He's serious." And they said, "If you can have him here at five o'clock, on the dot, for dinner 'cause we have a meeting at five o'clock, we'll take him in and we'll put him on the couch." And Chris was like, "Oh, great!" and hung up the phone and looked at his schedule and at 4:45 he had Meg Ryan as a client. And he's like, "I can't do it." He's like, "I have to be here for Meg." And he said, "Hold on a second," and he called Meg and he said, "Meg, I've got this guy. I need to take him in. Can we reschedule?" And he rescheduled Meg Ryan and he drove me to rehab. First we stopped at the Rite Aid and grabbed some Anbesol for my tongue and I opened it up in the store and he's like, "Dude, you can't open that in here! What are you stealing? Oh my God!" And I'm like, "Bro, I've got money. I'm—paying for this." But I put it on my tongue, he took me to rehab, 2/24/04, February 24, 2004, I checked into Liberty House and I've been sober ever since. Fourteen years sober and he paid for my first month. I actually worked it off 15 days, so I got my foot back in the door at Chris McMillan. And then my sponsor paid for the second month and then I was able to pay him back. And I was able to make enough money doing hair and I've been sober ever since and—

Winn: So *[laughs]* originally I was going to ask you, "How bad did it get?"

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: You just shared with us.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: It was bad.

Jason: It was really bad. I mean, I have some crazy stories that would definitely scare you.

Winn: Oh, any of us that are clean—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: I'm 16 years.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Yeah, we all have those stories that are pretty bad, pretty scary.

Jason: Yeah. Drunk logs.

Winn: It's a miracle that we're even alive.

Jason: One hundred percent.

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: Yeah. Super grateful and—

Winn: You're married now.

Jason: Married. I met my wife in the salon. She does hair also.

Winn: Okay.

Jason: And I met her at a year and a half of sobriety and I went up and I said, "You're kind of cute." And she said, "You're kind of cute." And I was like, *Whoa*. That's all I needed, was a little—

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: —a little interest.

Winn: That somebody—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: The first woman that says you're cute, you marry her. *[laughs]*

Jason: Oh my God. And now I have two beautiful kids: a five-year-old son, his name's Hobie, and Lennon is seven. And she—it's my daughter. And it's the best thing ever and married and was able to—I mean, check it out: 34 years old when Chris McMillan—when I met him, I had warrants for my arrest, I had

bad credit, I had nothing. I was done. And I thought life had passed me up. And in this 14 years, I've been able to get married, buy a house, and have a family. And I thought that life had passed me up. So, yeah, it's truly a blessing that I'm here talking to you and that I am able to be comfortable in my skin and not have to drink and use anything and I can still have fun—

Winn: Geez.

Jason: —and create.

Winn: So when you were working with Chris McMillan—

Jason: Yes.

Winn: —you said originally it was one day a week. What was he having you do that one day a week? I guess what I'm looking for now is we're going to send out a message to those who are in beauty school right now of what it takes. So, I mean, you said the story that what you learned in roller sets and rolling up perms back in 1984 eventually served you well in the Bruno Mars video. So—

Jason: Yeah. I mean, everything along the road—I didn't know—like whenever I'm in charge of something, I'm in the way of, I think, God's will. And it's interesting because the only one that can mess something up is me. *[laughs]* But working for Chris McMillan was just more substance to what made me who I am today as far as a hairstylist goes because I picked up stuff from 1984 in hair school from an instructor. I picked up stuff from the first hair salon that I worked at in 1988 from a woman who did a haircut. I picked up something from a woman that I worked at the Giuseppe salon and I picked up stuff from Chris. And in beauty school, I picked up just the picture of the face that we were doing makeup on because that was a part of cosmetology; you had to learn how to do makeup. And I was not going to do makeup.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And—you know what I mean, in 1988 when I was at hair school. But I went on to—and I remembered, I processed that thing about the T-zone, you know, where you put the powder. And so five years ago I had to—all these celebrities wanted me to do their camera—on-camera work and the studios wouldn't hire a hairstylist and a makeup artist for a guy.

Winn: Right.

Jason: And that's when men's grooming started to blossom. And I was like, "Look—"

Winn: So you were hired to do their hair—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —but before they're going on-camera, there's no makeup artist to finish the look.

Jason: No. So women are allowed—the production will pay for a woman to have a hairstylist and—

Winn: And a makeup artist.

Jason: —a makeup artist.

Winn: Huh.

Jason: But for a man, you have to have a groomer.

Winn: Okay.

Jason: A men's groomer.

Winn: Got it.

Jason: So I actually got asked by these guys to start doing production work and I was like, "I just can't do it because I don't do makeup."

Winn: Production work means?

Jason: Means traveling the world and doing press for *The X-Men*.

Winn: Okay.

Jason: Okay. So we go from city to country to everywhere and he's got to be on-camera.

Winn: Right.

Jason: And he's, you know, pale or he's got dry skin or whatever it may be, grooming-related. I had to learn how to do that. And guys, we get shiny, so I figured out how to put powder on. And I was taught that in beauty school but I wasn't present to that.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: So five years ago—

Winn: You kind of missed that day, maybe.

Jason: Yeah, kind of missed that. But anyways, I tell you this story because I had an agent that was trying to send me on these gigs, right? And I didn't have the makeup side of things. So what I did, I walked into a MAC store—

Winn: Okay.

Jason: —and I said—I walked in and all these girls were like, “What’s this dude doing in here?” Right? And they all swarmed me and I was like, “Hey, I need to learn how to do men’s makeup.” And they said, “Men’s makeup? What’s men’s makeup?” And I was like, *Okay, good. That’s a good sign.*

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: Right? So I said—

Winn: *I’m not the only one who—*

Jason: Yeah. So I said, “You know, like maybe we’ll use some powder.” And I’m like, “I need to put a kit together.” And so what I did was, I said, “Okay, hand me some powder. Hand me some stuff for a black dude.” I just wanted to cover all my bases, you know? And so I put this kit together and they showed me and I was like, “Do you remember the chart?” and they’re like, “Oh, we have that, with the picture of the face.” And I’m like, “Let’s review that. Can you show me?”

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And so we did this all together and I was like, “Do you got a masculine makeup bag?” And I saw this box up at the top. There was a black box and I was like, “I’ll take it.” And I walked out of the store with \$500 in a black box and I walked out and—

Winn: And your training and education. Okay.

Jason: Yeah. And I called my agent and I said, “I went to makeup school and I’m ready to do men’s grooming.”

Winn: *[laughs]* Was it, “An hour at the MAC store was my makeup school”?

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Wow.

Jason: And she bought it and then she sent me on this job and my first job was—

Winn: What was—

Jason: —Owen Wilson.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And I showed up and he’s—I was like, “Oh yeah, your hair. I got this.” And I knocked it out and he was trippin’. He was like, “Oh my God. This is great.”

And he just got back from Hawaii 'cause he lives there and he was super tan. I was like, "Bro, you look great." He's like, "Yeah, I don't think I need makeup." I'm like, "Nope, don't need makeup."

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And it was a movie with Jack Black and Steve Martin.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And it was like this bird-watching movie. And I sat at the monitor and the other groomers that did Jack and Steve, they were standing there and I was like, "Wow, your dude looks really good. What'd you use on him?" And they were like, "I used this Visiora number three." And I'm like, "Can I get a picture of that?" And I was like, "How did you use it?" And they're like, "Oh, you put a little moisturizer here," and I continued to do that to every gig I was sent on. And I don't have anything in that MAC thing except a couple brushes, you know? But I've basically just poached from all these groomers that were really giving to help me and that's how I was taught. And—but the thing goes back to when I was young about being into the fashion and making sure that things are done right and not overdone, and shapes and all of that stuff are very important to me and that's why I think I do good men's haircuts and people love the grow-out because I take all that into consideration. But even with makeup, I don't want a dude looking like he's got makeup on.

Winn: Right.

Jason: And so I'm really like light-handed and I try and ride that line of like really natural. And then I really got good at doing makeup when I started doing James Corden four nights a week 'cause it's like now I'm doing it all the time.

Winn: Now you do his hair and his makeup.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Every day.

Jason: Hair and makeup.

Winn: Wow.

Jason: It's men's grooming. And it—what's funny is when I started doing men's grooming, I searched—I was trying to brand myself 'cause I'm like, *I'm going to stop doing women. I'm just going to do guys.* And people were like, "You can't make money just doing guys." And I was like, "Yeah, I can." I'm like, "Check it out. You're making \$250 a haircut doing women's hair and it takes you an hour. I'm going to do men's haircuts for \$125 and I'll do two in an hour and it's the same price as you."

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: “You watch.” And I did it and that’s when I started doing just men and then I was searching online and Instagram and Twitter and I found “themensgroomer” was open on every level. And I branded it and I branded myself as The Men’s Groomer and I trademarked it and everywhere it is just The Men’s Groomer. And now I started a little product line which actually is going to be awesome ’cause I’m going to use proceeds to help fund these street cuts that I’m doing, which I already started. I’ve donated to this place that I went through. It’s the same structure as Liberty House. It’s called Awakening and part of my proceeds from the products are going into help nonprofit fund this rehab.

Winn: I have all kinds of questions.

Jason: Shoot!

Winn: When you said, “Doing things right,” what does that mean to you?

Jason: Hm. Well, doing things right is about a man—and I talk about it in—it’s art for me and it’s like a man looks at this hair in the morning and he shouldn’t spend more than a couple minutes styling it, okay? If something’s not done right, it’s going to take him a lot longer to style that area. So what I do is I pull out the hair and I make sure that in everywhere you put it—a good haircut styles itself—so wherever the hair’s going, it needs to look good. So that’s doing it right. Like I spoke of the makeup, like I don’t want it to look cakey. I don’t want him to look shiny. And I definitely don’t want him to look too matte. So that’s doing it right. When I build my house and decorate my house, it’s like there’s a flow and it’s got to be done right. My truck outside: I get to design it. You know, I have the right wheels. I have the right—what’s it called? The footboard on the side, I don’t even know what it’s called. *[laughs]*

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: The running board. I just get to do things right. You know, when I surf, I studied style, whose style I liked and what works for me. And I definitely don’t want to be bent over weird so I’m in tune to doing things right for me.

Winn: How do people do things wrong, in your opinion? Are they just—they’re not doing their research. They’re just lazy. They don’t take pride in it. What are the mistakes that people are making?

Jason: Okay. Not to break my arm patting myself on the back, but I feel like style is something you’re born with. And, I mean, you look at James Dean and Steve McQueen, you know, and those are my, you know, mentors, I guess. It’s just, you know, some people have it and some people don’t. So, yeah, do your research. And—but I think it’s too much. Like today I showed up and, Winn,

you have all black on and you look incredible and you had a cheetah sport jacket.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And it's just perfect 'cause it was one pop. You didn't do the cheetah sport jacket, the red belt, and the Doc Marten with the red, you know, laces.

Winn: Oh you missed the red hat that I had on in the—

Jason: Oh yeah?

Winn: No, I didn't.

Jason: *[laughs]*

Winn: I didn't. I'm just kidding.

Jason: I think it was the Santa hat.

Winn: And is my makeup overdone?

Jason: It was the Santa hat.

Winn: Am I okay?

Jason: You look great, Winn.

Winn: Okay, good, good.

Jason: You look great. Not too shiny.

Winn: What would you do with my hair?

Jason: Um, I would—

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: *[laughs]* I think we're at a loss here, buddy.

Winn: I think you would—

Jason: I think you did the right thing.

Winn: —you would go out of business is what you would do.

Jason: Yeah. You did the right thing.

Winn: So at what point did you stop cutting women's hair?

Jason: Okay, so I was trained by Chris McMillan and I got really good at women's hair. And I worked and did that for about 10 years.

Winn: Color, as well.

Jason: Oh yeah. So I was—I assisted Andy Lecompte, who did—

Winn: Hm, incredible. Yeah.

Jason: —did Madonna's hair—

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: And I worked with Amanda from the Neil George Salon, who did every blonde. And I assisted her for a while. And I'm good at hair color, I think. I like to do it right. So I learned how to do it right and I can still color hair. My wife is amazing at coloring, at blow-drying. My wife does Jennifer Aniston's hair now.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: She did Sarah Jessica Parker's hair for a movie. She's worked with Reese. She does Mariska Hargitay. She stopped doing hair for seven years and she's been raising our children but now she's doing hair part time. Her and Chris McMillan are splitting this new morning show with Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon and she's doing Jennifer Aniston's hair. But she can, literally, color her own hair so it's like the 10,000-hour rule. I'm sure you've heard about the 10,000 hours.

Winn: Oh, of course.

Jason: So—

Winn: I learned—I interviewed Peter Vidmar, who's been decorated with more gold medals in the gymnastics world than anybody else and he talks a lot about 10,000.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Like calculating have I spent 10,000 hours in the gym? Oh yeah, absolutely, I have.

Jason: Yeah, you master something.

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: And I spent 10,000 hair coloring. My wife has. I've spent 10,000 hours doing makeup now.

Winn: That's funny 'cause that was the—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —the next question that I had written down to ask you about, people who want it instantly.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: So they're, "Well, I met Jason at the school today and he shook my hand and so I could be doing Bruno Mars' hair tomorrow."

Jason: Yeah. It's—

Winn: Well, what's your advice to people that—

Jason: Well, I've—

Winn: —want it so quickly.

Jason: I've seen people—

Winn: They call it the microwave generation, they—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —want it instantly.

Jason: It's a turnoff, first of all.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: It's a turnoff. *[laughs]*

Winn: Good for you.

Jason: I mean, the—you've got to pay your dues. I mean, some people are really, really fast and great like DomDomHair, who's on Instagram, who's a friend of mine, who's got 500,000 followers and he assisted Chris McMillan, he assisted Cristina Rocha, he assisted Andy Lecompte. And within two years, he's killing it. And now he's—it's longer. He's been doing it longer but I can say within two years he had it and he's got it. And if you check out his Instagram, DomDomHair, I'm sure all the hair people already follow him but—

Winn: Hm.

Jason: —he gets it. But, you know, I get assistants that come in and they're—what's the word? Eager is okay.

Winn: *[laughs]* That's a—

Jason: Very ambitious—

Winn: Okay.

Jason: —is the way to say it. I like that. They're very ambitious. And it's a turnoff. And you have to like get humble, you know? And that's what I did with Chris. Even doing hair from '88 to 2000, you know, my version of doing hair, which was cutting my friends' hair and hair schools, five different hair schools. But I had to get humble and that—working with Chris was just standing and I didn't pick up a scissor and it was actually interesting how he found out that I could even cut hair 'cause I'd worked with him. But what happens, he would be at meetings and he'd be seeing guys with haircuts and he's like, "Oh, nice haircut. Who did your hair?" And he's like, "This guy Jason." He's like, "Oh, yeah. He works for me." And so he had found out that I could do hair, not even from being in the salon—

Winn: Wow.

Jason: —from being at meetings of recovery.

Winn: Hm. Wow. I guess, define it. Like 'cause they want to know, "Well, you tell me I can't be ambitious? I thought ambitious was a good thing." What—well, you said they've got to be humble.

Jason: Yeah, I mean—

Winn: They've got to be teachable, they've got to—

Jason: Yes. Be open 'cause you don't know where you're going to end up. And I didn't know and just being a yes person is the key. Being yourself is the key. Being early is the key.

Winn: *[laughs]* Thank you.

Jason: Being of service, opening up doors, and constantly reading the room. Reading the room is huge. Like I feel—

Winn: Talk about that.

Jason: Okay, so when I'm doing my grooming jobs, there's way more to it than just the hair and makeup because you have to know, when somebody's looking at their phone doing an email, not to talk and ask them a question, right? You need to know when they're in their trailer and it's quiet and you're just going to sit and disappear. You know what I mean? So you—there's times when you need to read the room and I can—I've always been a chameleon where I can hang out with the heavy metalers—that's what it was back in the day.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: At the bike racks, you know what I mean? Or I can hang out with the football jocks, or I can hang out with the surfer crew and I can hang out with the drama crew. I was a chameleon. I could hang out—so when you learn when to shine and when to pull back is really important. And so, you know, being ambitious and being eager is great but knowing when to be humble is really important. And it's tough because when you get good at something, you want to be like, "Hey! Check me out over here!" You know? But there's times for it and you'll be able to do it.

Winn: What do you think about people who—they have 20,000 Instagram followers but not one paying customer but they think, *Look at me, I've made it?*

Jason: Um—

Winn: So they made it on social media but—

Jason: Yeah. I—

Winn: —that doesn't always translate into money in your pocket.

Jason: Yeah. I think it's great if you can show there's a reason why you have a lot of Instagram followers and I think that what's next? You know what I mean? It's like, "Cool, you conquered that. What's next?"

Winn: Okay, what's next?

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: That's not the end-all and some people—

Jason: No.

Winn: —think that's the end-all. Okay.

Jason: I'm constantly pushing myself on the daily. And the other thing I've noticed is when I put something out into the universe, it's come true.

Winn: What do you mean?

Jason: I was like manifesting, *Hey, I need to get sober*, and I did, and I did the work. And, *Hey, I need to clean up my credit*, and it felt like it would never happen. And I had to wait and I had to do the work to clean up my credit. I felt like I wanted to buy a house and I didn't know how to do that. And I continued to show up to work and I made money and I had a client that was sitting in my chair that was a mortgage broker. And then I had a client that was a real estate agent.

Winn: *[laughs]* Sitting in your chair.

Jason: And I've learned that delegating and asking for help is the way that I learn, you know? And so I was like, "Really? So how do I get a loan or what am I eligible for?" And they're like, "If you make 60 grand a year, you can get a \$500,000 loan but you've got to do it for two years." And I was like, "Cool." So I set my goal and I said I'm going to do this and then it happened and it shows up—the house shows up.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And I'm like, *[sings]* "Ahhhh! I can't believe this happened," do you know what I mean?

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And I'm like, *What's next?* And now, you know, I was like, I want to be a celebrity hairstylist. And I was like, show up to the right place, do the work, do what's in front of me, take the action, and it showed up. And I was like, *What's next?* And I'm like, I want to have a family. Okay, great. Showed up. Next—*What's next?* I want to start a product line. Working on that now. It's great. The service work that I do, that was something that was, *What's next?* And that was conducive on my sobriety and staying sober. So that was a very important *What's next?* And, you know what? I'll tell you, it didn't come easy because I'm not that kind of person naturally. I'm not a saint. I'm a drug addict.

Winn: What do you mean? You're not the—it's not naturally a part of who you are to—

Jason: No!

Winn: —give back and to think of others.

Jason: No! Dude, look at my story, bro.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: It's been a rebellion. It's been about, "What can I have? What can I get? What do I want?"

Winn: Right.

Jason: Okay? And you know what? What I thought I needed and what I wanted is two different things but what I thought would fix me—the car, the house, all this stuff—it leaves me a bit empty. What really fixes me is the joy of giving and, you know, I was always one that liked to receive. And I found that by giving, I get to feel amazing and I get to sleep with a smile every night and I get to stay sober.

Winn: Well, let's get into that—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —because you—what you say is—and it's on your T-shirts even, it's your tagline is that a haircut can change people's lives.

Jason: Yes.

Winn: It saves people's lives. And you also talk about how that's what keeps you sober. The reason why you're on the street cutting hair and talking to homeless people and hearing their stories and giving them advice and providing resource for them is maybe for selfish reasons but selfish in a good way: it keeps you—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —sober.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Can you talk about that?

Jason: Well, early in recovery—

Winn: And, by the way, you don't have to be—that can't be what you're chasing, i.e.: sobriety. People are chasing happiness or they're chasing how to fix their marriage. They're chasing something: how to forgive themselves, how to forgive mom and dad. And sometimes the solution to all of those things or to any of those things is of service.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Giving back.

Jason: Yeah. I mean, seriously, from the minute I wake up, my head's going. And it is like, *Oh my God, am I going to be okay today? I have to meet with this Winn guy. It's all the way down south. Am I going to be on time? Am I going to be good enough?* Like, it's just loud. My head is loud. And why? Because I'm in self. I'm thinking of myself. When I get out of self, I have no problems. So that is one of the reasons—that's like—so can I stay in that a lot and feel good? *[laughs]* Yes. If I do a lot of service, I get to feel really good. So I've tapped into that. But early in recovery I was taught that that method—my life got really full and it was all about what I can get and work, okay? And I, you know, I shifted my addiction and it became work was feeding me, you know, and making me feel good. And then like everything else that I put in my body or obsess over or do too much of, it stops giving me enjoyment. So I was taught I need to be of service to stay sober. And being real busy doing hair is

great. I have to provide for my family but at the same time, I need to give back. And a lot of people go and help people in recovery in order to give back. And I wanted to continue to do that and I did that early on in my recovery but when I got super busy, I wasn't able to do as much. And I realized in my profession, I have the best of both worlds. I can do hair and I can be of service.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: And so when I'm on the street, I soften my heart a bit because I'm listening and I'm out of self. And I also am looking for addicts that are sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Winn: So tell me the first time that you decided, "I'm going to hit the streets. I'm going to go find an addict on the street and I'm going to ask them if they want a haircut." When did that happen and what did that look like? What did that feel like?

Jason: Okay, so a lot of the things I've been saying that I've been trained through me driving into situations and then taking things out of that situation. So I, at one point, was like—somebody was like, "Dude, you're a rock star. You do celebrities' hair." And they're like, "We need to do this like piece on you." So the guy came out with a camera and I was like, "I want to do hair ambush where we go on the street and I find a guy that doesn't have—" what were we talking about?—"doesn't do it right."

Winn: Okay.

Jason: Remember, you were saying—

Winn: Right.

Jason: —doesn't do it right?

Winn: Right.

Jason: So you've got the guy who's out there and he's wearing the Skechers shoes and he's got a vest on and he's great-looking. And his hair's frumpy and his outfit's off.

Winn: So not a homeless guy.

Jason: No.

Winn: Just a regular guy on the street—

Jason: Yes.

Winn: —and ask—that was the original intention with you on the street with cameras.

Jason: Yes!

Winn: Okay.

Jason: I want to go help this dude and get him a job.

Winn: Right.

Jason: You know what I mean? Get him a promotion or like, you know, have a good Tinder profile or whatever it is.

Winn: Right.

Jason: Just I want to help a dude out and I want to do it quick 'cause I can do it quick. So we went out—

Winn: You know, Skechers is one of my sponsors of my podcast, right?

Jason: Oh really?

Winn: No—

Jason: Okay.

Winn: —they're not. I'm not—I—

Jason: Oh good. Well maybe—

Winn: I don't have any sponsors so we're okay.

Jason: Maybe—well, Skechers—

Winn: There never will be, so but—

Jason: My daughter wants Skechers. I was like—

Winn: Oh! *[laughs]*

Jason: “Wait, what? Why do you want Skechers?” So they're doing something right, you know?

Winn: Okay, okay. *[laughs]*

Jason: But anyways, so we went out and we shot a businessman on his lunchbreak. And I hooked him up and he went from “not to hot” in *[laughs]* a couple minutes, right? And I saw him walk off back to work and he was walking tall

and proud and we were just like looking at him going, “Wow, that was amazing.” And then we did a skateboarder kid that had a bad hat and was like frumpy. And he was kind of a drug addict and I hooked him up and that was kind of like transcending into, hmm, drug addict kid kind of, you know, needing some help. And then we went by U-Haul and there was a homeless guy on the side. And the guy who was shooting was like, “That dude, right there!” And I was like, “Okay, cool.” And I ran over there and he was a Mexican guy and the people in the neighborhood knew him and they were like—and the woman at the U-Haul was like, “Yeah, this guy over here.” And so we went over and we did it and I was like, “Do you want a haircut?” And he was drunk and he was like, “No! No! No! No! No! No! No!” And then everybody was like—or started circling around and they were like, “Yeah, do it! Do it!” And the guy was like, “No!” And they were talking to him and then we did it and I helped him out and it was a makeover and we filmed it and it was great. And I went home and nothing came of it. And then I think I was scrolling through Instagram and I saw Mark Bustos, who’s in New York City, and he was already tapped into this.

Winn: Great guy.

Jason: Yeah. And he came out and I met him and I was like, “Bro, how do you do it? What do you do? How do you do it? What do you do?” You know? And he’s like, “Bro, just—”

Winn: I interviewed him right here.

Jason: Oh, did you?

Winn: He was sitting in the chair you’re sitting in right now.

Jason: That’s awesome.

Winn: Incredible.

Jason: So I was like, “Bro, what do you do?” and he was so humble. And I was like, *Oh my God, I want what he has*. And then he called me and he’s like, “Bro, I’m here for Thanksgiving. You want to go do a haircut?” And I was like, “Yeah,” and we did it and it was just amazing. And—but before that—back up ’cause that was later on—but I was sitting home and I was like—I had that like burning desire to go and do these haircuts. And then I called my business partner that we were working on The Men’s Groomer stuff and I was like, “Bro, I’m going out to Hollywood Boulevard. I’m going tomorrow. I just came back from Sally’s Beauty and I bought cordless clippers,” which was a blessing ’cause they didn’t have good cordless clippers and now, this day and age, they do. And I spent, you know, three, four hundred bucks on cordless clippers. I put a whole set together and I grabbed some gloves and some disinfectant stuff and I put it in a backpack and I called my business partner. And I was like, “Dude, I’m going out tomorrow,” and I said, “Look, I’m going

out with or without you and it's not going to be pretty and I know it's not for you but I'm going to go." And he's like, "Dude, I've been with you since the beginning," he's like, "What time? I'll see you there." And we parked under Hollywood and Orange in the parking structure and we came out with our backpacks. And I was like, "Follow me." And I had done club promotions so I'm not afraid to approach people in the street and I bought drugs in all of these places where I'm definitely not afraid of anybody.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And I can read the room and I know if a dude's looking at me sideways or if he's not mentally secure. I don't know if that's the right word but—and, you know, I don't approach everybody the same way. I kind of like—I'm a people person and I'm like I go up to him and I start talking to him and I'll see him staring off and I'll stare off and I'll start talking to him about, "How long you've been out here? What's your story? Do you want a haircut?" And a lot of them will be like, "Yeah." A lot of them will be, "No," and I'll move on. But that's how it started was with my clippers and my buddy, my business partner, filmed it. And it's been important to me not to exploit. You know, it's kind of a tricky line that I walk on. And I think I just, you know, emulate Mark, what he does. And it's—I mean, my heart's in the right place always. And it's a sensitive subject and I don't—I—you know, and what's interesting is my lane is the recovery side of things and I was taught how to go after the disease of alcoholism and addiction because I spent a lot of time in rehabs. And I've learned the language and I know what to look for. So a lot of the times I just will go right after the disease and I'll ask them, "Hey, are you sick and tired of being sick and tired?" I'm not trying to drag somebody to rehab. I'm looking for somebody that wants help. And, I mean, this homeless problem here in LA is completely overwhelming. Sixty-five thousand homeless people, last time I checked, and tent cities popping up everywhere and there's trash and there's good people and there's bad people, you know, or people that are making bad decisions, I should say, 'cause I made bad decisions. I wasn't a bad person but I was making bad decisions based on needing what I needed in order to feel healthy. You know, when you get hooked on drugs and alcohol, it's the only thing that's getting me through the day until you can actually completely get off of drugs and alcohol. So, you know how when the cops pull you over and the guy's drunk, they throw him in the drunk tank. They don't try and talk to him, you know, and talk sense into him 'til the next day.

Winn: Right.

Jason: So a lot of the times, I'll like leave my number and I'll be like, "Hey dude, you're a good-looking dude. You look amazing, you know, and, it'd be great if you can get a job. It'd be great if you could get your life back together and here's my number. Give me a call." And I wait for people to call me. And a lot of people don't call. A lot of people also will be like, "I'm ready to go." And so I'm trying to—

Winn: Those that have called you, then what? What's the next step?

Jason: So that's where I'm at a standstill a bit. I'm trying to figure this all out but I'd love to create some funding to get—there's a few nonprofits. This one that I'm working with now, it's a nonprofit recovery place that's a 12-month program. And they're also growing their facility where a lot of hedge funds clients were all affiliated with wealthy people and—

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: —they want to donate and they're donating money to fund people that don't have insurance 'cause it's—the whole recovery world—

Winn: It's expensive.

Jason: Yeah, it's expensive.

Winn: Right.

Jason: And it's also—it's a lot of craziness 'cause a lot of people are trying to capitalize on you.

Winn: It's big business.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: Big business. But is it real recovery?

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: And that's what I know. I can see real recovery when I see it.

Winn: Mm-hm.

Jason: And that's what I'm into is like if a person needs help and they don't have money, I can take them to the place of my choice and that's what The Men's Groomer product line is trying to do. And, you know, eventually, you know, working with people like you and other people, I'm—and I'm just a drug addict dude. I'm not a saint, like I said before. I don't have the ins and outs of this big problem of homelessness and mental illness, and I know it goes back to politics and all that stuff. And I'm just doing what's in front of me, one cut at a time.

Winn: You know what you remind me of?

Jason: What's—

Winn: What's the—remember the story about the little kid who's walking down the beach and there's all the starfish that got washed up—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —and they got stranded on the beach. And so he's walking down the beach, you know, one by one—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —throwing them back into the ocean. And some man stops and says, "What are you doing?" He's like, "Well, look at all these starfish."

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: He's like, "Look at them. There's thousands. There's no way you can make a difference."

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: And he picks up a starfish and he throws it in the ocean—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —and he said, *[laughs]* "Made a difference with that one."

Jason: Ah, I love that. I love that. Yeah.

Winn: That's what you're doing. It's 65,000—people listening to this thinking, *65,000*—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —*Jason*—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —*what can you do?*

Jason: Yeah. You've got to—

Winn: And you're just, *One at a time.*

Jason: Yeah. Something's got to change. And I feel like if we all throw a starfish in—

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: —we can really make a difference.

Winn: So you—you—sometimes you show up with stuff that you give away. So, let's—you know, supplies—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —coats, blankets, toothbrushes. What are you showing up with? And where are you getting this stuff?

Jason: Okay. So it started with me doing a Thanksgiving piece and I went to the grocery store and I bought the turkey and I bought the cranberry and I rented a table and I did all this and I came out of pocket. And then I was like, just like everything else, it just kind of unfolded, snowballed. And I had a friend say, "Why don't you do an Amazon registry?" And I was like, "Oh, I kind of know what that means because we had a wedding and we had a registry." *[laughs]*

Winn: *[laughs]* You mean your wife got stuff that way.

Jason: Yeah. And so—

Winn: Okay.

Jason: —so I was like, "Oh, a registry. Okay, cool. So like—" and he said, "We can put on our thing to help the homeless. We can pick out—" and I was like, "Send toothbrushes, send socks, send underwear, send blankets."

Winn: How did you promote that? Just through your social media?

Jason: Everything that I've done has gone through The Men's Groomer.

Winn: Okay.

Jason: Or Jason Schneidman on Facebook but it's been The Men's Groomer on Instagram. And—

Winn: So you put it out there, "I've got this Amazon registry and this is what I need."

Jason: Yep, link is in my bio—

Winn: Okay.

Jason: —so you can go to the front of my page. You can tap on it and it'll take you right to Amazon you can see what the stuff is.

Winn: All the things that you—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —you designated, "I need you to help me purchase these things—"

Jason: Exactly.

Winn: “—’cause I’m hitting the streets and I’ve got to fill up my truck.”

Jason: Yeah. And I’d talk to the homeless and I’m like, “What do you really need, you know, out here?”

Winn: What kind of response did you get in donations?

Jason: Oh, the first time we did it, it blew us away and I never know how these events are going to be. See, the other thing is I put up on my Instagram, “Please: estheticians, hairstylists, barbers, people come out.” You know what I mean? Doctor, services, whatever, come up, show up; whatever you can do, talk to people. And I show up to these events a little in fear. I’m like, *Is it going to be 75 non-homeless people or is it going to be, you know, 80 people that are homeless and three barbers?* You know what I mean?

Winn: Right.

Jason: And so you never know the balance but every time I show up, it’s perfect the way it is.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: So it’s crazy and—

Winn: It’s perfect the way it is. *[laughs]*

Jason: Yeah. It’s just perfect the way it is. It’s—and, you know what? Even if it was 80 homeless people and me, it would be fine because I would do what I can do and—but the thing is, so I put it up on my Instagram, The Men’s Groomer, and Facebook, Jason Schneidman, and people send stuff and it was showing up to my garage and I loaded it in my big ’64 Chevy pickup and I tied it down and I drove out. I looked like Sanford and Son, you know—

Winn: Right.*[laughs]*

Jason: —it was piled high, all this stuff. And then I show up and everybody’s just so stoked. They’re just—

Winn: Wow.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Where do you see this going? What’s your hope?

Jason: Well, I’m excited—

Winn: Like you said you’ve got to put it out there so use my platform: put it out there.

Jason: Yeah. So 2019 I feel is going to be a great year. I'm here with you and I just met maybe 30 barbers that I said, "2019's going to be a great year and I'm going to use you guys," and they all put their hands up and they were fired up. So I think we can really grow this with doing hair. A lot of these shelters and these local resources have medical attention. They have shower vans. They have HIV testing. They have food. They have placement. They're doing cell phone. They're doing DMV records. But they can't get hairstylists.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: And they're hurting for that side of it. And they're—

Winn: Seems like that would be the easiest part of the whole equation.

Jason: Yeah. But it's not and—

Winn: Huh.

Jason: —and getting people to show up. So I'd like—

Winn: Wow.

Jason: —to be the pied piper there—

Winn: Huh.

Jason: —with your help.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And then also growing my brand, The Men's Groomer, so we can actually do like a homeboy thing where, you know, I have a warehouse full of making products and we can actually employ some people there and a lot of the funding can go like a TOMS-type thing. And then also, you know, getting people back into housing and getting people into recovery that are willing. And I don't know where it's going, man. We're just gonna—we're going to wing it.

Winn: Right.

Jason: 2019's going to be great.

Winn: A lot of people listening to this have—what's going to prevent them or one of the things that's going to prevent them is just fear. It's not safe out there.

Jason: Mm-hm.

Winn: What's your advice? Even if they personally aren't out there, there's so many—I'm—I work with a couple of different organizations within downtown LA and Skid Row—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —that serve the need there.

Jason: Yeah, I mean, a lot of people ask, "How do you do it?" And I—it goes back to safety and sanitation, which I was taught in—

Winn: Right.

Jason: —hair school and I was like, "Yeah, that's great," you know?

Winn: Right.

Jason: But it really does come down to that and I find, like people don't know how to read people so it's better if you've got a couple of people together. And you just go out and you talk to some people. Other people that look dodgy, you might not talk to them. And they may come around after. But, yeah, I mean, just going out and trying it and talking to people and taking people with you.

Winn: Yeah. Do you have a favorite story that you like to tell of somebody that you met on the street? And I—in the videos—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —that I saw of you—

Jason: I do.

Winn: —you're—while you're doing their hair, you're talking to them about their drug use and what's—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —going on. I mean, you're very—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: You don't dance around that topic at all.

Jason: No. I'm very much after the disease that I spoke of. Like I don't—I don't judge people.

Winn: Some people don't know what that means: you're very much after the disease.

Jason: Okay, so I know that if an addict's mouth is moving, they're probably full of crap. Okay—

Winn: Right.

Jason: —so I don't care so much about their—okay, so what they've been doing has been getting them bad outcome.

Winn: Right.

Jason: So change what you're doing, get a different result.

Winn: Right.

Jason: So that's what I'm about. Okay? Helping them do something different to get a different result. And so the—my favorite story, or not my favorite but one of my stories, is this guy Cody that I met. And I was in New York City doing the Grammys with James Corden. He was hosting the Grammys and I brought my stuff with me and I went out into the city and—

Winn: So there you are to do the Grammys—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —but then you're hitting the streets to find—

Jason: Oh yeah.

Winn: —the homeless at the same time.

Jason: Oh yeah. I mean, you can only shop in New York City for so long to fix you. I was like, *I'm going to go take my backpack and do some haircuts.*

Winn: Well, you've already defined that that's what you need, that's what fixes you—

Jason: Yes.

Winn: —that's what keeps you clean and sober. That's what—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —helps you sleep at night.

Jason: Yeah, dude—

Winn: Okay.

Jason: —it feels amazing. And so I took my stuff and I was like, *Where am I going? It's really cold out here. I think I'm going to hit the subways [laughs] 'cause it's*

a little less wet and warmer. So I'm traveling down the escalator and at the bottom of the escalator, there's a dude with a sign that says, "Too ugly to prostitute, too honest to steal."

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And I look at him and I was like, "Want a haircut?" *[laughs]*

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And he's like, "Yeah. You've got clippers?" And I was like, "Yeah, I've got everything." And he's like, "Let's do it." And so Cody—his name's Cody, we walk off into the thing and he's like, he's like, "Dude, I'm so hungry," as we're walking so I'm like, "There's a pizza place." I buy him a slice of pizza. I have a slice of pizza 'cause that's what you do in New York. And we post up right in front of the—in the subway and the cops are circling the subway. And I'm like, "We're doing it here!" And he's like, "Right here, man?" And I'm like, "Yeah, why not? Let's see what happens, you know?" So I pulled the pizza chair out into the subway area and I'm cutting. And we're halfway through the haircut and he's telling me that his brother had died from Oxycontin, and recently, he OD'd in front of him and that he's sick and tired of being sick and tired. And I could see it on his face. And he was like, "Bro, this is just so tiring. I'm so done. I've been out here for 10 years," or seven years. I think it was 10 years. And I could see it. And I could relate because I know 'cause I'd been there myself. And so the cops come up and they're like, "What are you doing? You can't do this here? You can't do this in there," and I was like, "Okay, we're moving." So me and Cody walk and I continue to talk to him more about, you know, his—maybe getting him sober and that kind of thing, helping him out. And we go up to the street and we're right in the middle of—what's that area? I guess Penn Station, up on the street. And we finish the haircut. People are surrounding and they're videoing and, you know, at the end of the video I say, you know, "You're a good-looking dude and, you know, I want to see you succeed," and I gave him my number. And he was on Facebook following me and we were talking to each other a little bit. Every so often he'd go into a library 'cause he didn't have a cell phone and he would check his Facebook and he'd send me a message. And then a girl on Facebook was like, "That dude's a piece of crap," and, you know, "what are you doing helping him? He robbed me here and there." And I said—explained to her openly on my Facebook, I responded to this girl and I said, "Look." I said, "We'll steal from our grandmas and our loved ones and we will do whatever it takes to get what we want. And that doesn't make it right." And I said, "Hopefully, one day he can make an amends to you by paying you back." And everybody responded on Facebook like, "Wow!" I took a stand, you know, in the open to respond to this girl and I'm not giving up on this dude because he's a human that's made bad decisions based on drug use. So he called me. He thought that was huge that I'd stood up for him and he trusted me. And he called me and he said, "I am taking a bus across country and I'm going to detox off heroin myself. I

might die on the way.” And I said, “You call me every stop on the Greyhound.” And he called me all the way across. And I picked him up downtown LA and I set up a place, a detox, and I took him to the recovery place that I went to. And he stayed for a couple months. He left. He went back out and he’s going in and out. And I’m not giving up on him.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: You know, he called me yesterday and I said, “Dude, I’m trying to figure out how to get you into a place.” He wants to be a hairstylist, too.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: And I hope I don’t get the call from him that he’s dead or in jail. And I’m like, I keep telling him, I’m like, “Dude—” and I took him back to this recovery place and he couldn’t detox there. He wanted to do it his way and so I’m going to give him another chance and I’m trying to figure out funding to get him into a detox and then into a place. And he says he’s ready. So we’ll keep trying, you know?

Winn: Wow. Good for you.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: Geez. What does your wife think of all of this?

Jason: She is onboard and I have to balance it, you know?

Winn: Does it scare her a little bit?

Jason: Yeah. I think she’s a little scared.

Winn: Yeah.

Jason: I think so.

Winn: You have two young kids.

Jason: Yeah. I mean, they come out to the events and it’s amazing. And I’m teaching them good stuff and they see it and they know. I mean, this other day a woman walked by with a big blanket that we were giving out and she was so happy. And my kids saw her and she was like, “Last night I was sleeping on cardboard and tonight I get to sleep on this big fluffy blanket.” She ran off and the kids got to see that, so.

Winn: You know, our kids are watching. They’re listening.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah.

Winn: My daughter made me circle the block the other day—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —in search of a homeless woman that she had seen.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: And we finally found her and—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —got out of the car—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —and we had a package ready to give to her—

Jason: Nice.

Winn: —and it was—but this was my daughter’s idea.

Jason: Wow.

Winn: She’s six.

Jason: Wow, yeah.

Winn: But they listen.

Jason: Yeah, it’s scary to them and they’re like, “What is this?” you know? Like they don’t get it. They don’t get the concept of money and work when they’re that young.

Winn: Hm.

Jason: So.

Winn: Dang. This has been great.

Jason: Yeah. Thank you. It all comes out. *[laughs]*

Winn: Yeah, it does.

Jason: I was like—

Winn: You can talk!

Jason: I know.

Winn: *[laughs]*

Jason: I didn't realize.

Winn: *[laughs]* No, you're—

Jason: How long have we been talking?

Winn: I have no idea.

Jason: Mm-hm.

Winn: But it's been—wow.

Jason: Yeah. The only reason why I can talk is 'cause it's my experience.

Winn: It's what you're passionate about.

Jason: And it's my experience, you know? It's easy to talk about it. I lived it. I'm living it right now and I am passionate about being in the right place at the right time to maybe change somebody's life.

Winn: Wow. Jason, do you have a final message for our listeners?

Jason: Well, I think I just said it. I mean, I want to be in the right place at the right time to maybe change somebody's life. And God, I just don't know. I don't have a profound message really. It's like I just—

Winn: You've been sharing one for the last hour, plus.

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: It's profound. Today's one of those days where I wish MASTERS was video so people could see you. You're like jumping out of your chair.

Jason: *[laughs]*

Winn: You're like all over the place, man. While you're talking, you are just—you are animated and, I mean, this is—

Jason: Yeah.

Winn: —real authentic for you.

Jason: Thanks. Thanks, man. Yeah, I enjoy—I enjoy this now. Definitely. I hope 2019 we can just keep growing.

Winn: Cool. Thanks, Jason.

Jason: Thank you so much.

Winn: I'm going to help you get the word out.

Jason: Nice, thank you. Thank you very much for what you do.

Winn: It's a pleasure.